

# Roles & Responsibilities and Working Together



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Trustees & Friends Conference

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# Why Do Public Libraries Exist? VSA Title 22

## Chapter 3, § 67

(a) The General Assembly declares it to be the policy of the State of Vermont that **free public libraries are essential** to the general enlightenment of citizens in a democracy and that every citizen of the State of Vermont should have access to the educational, cultural, recreational, informational, and research benefits of a free public library.

# What is the Primary Duty of the Trustees?

Well-Being of the Library

# Primary Responsibility of Trustees

## Well-Being of the Library

- Understand the community and its needs
- Understand the law & avoid Conflict of Interest
- Exercise discretion and respect confidentiality outside board meetings
- Put personal agendas aside when making decisions
- Plan for the future: Resilience

## OVERSIGHT



Source:  
[https://www.flickr.com/photos/nicholas\\_t/10250370544/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/nicholas_t/10250370544/)

## DAILY MANAGEMENT



Source:  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/amon-ra123m5/5624590992/>

# Library Board Basic Tasks - Oversight

- Policy & Bylaws
- Advocate
- Strategic/long-range planning
- Promote & evaluate library
- Hire, fire, & evaluate a director
- Budget & funding sources
- Building/Grounds Safety & Vibe
- Community Link



# Director Basic Tasks – Daily Management

- Daily operations & budget management
- Hire, train, supervise, & fire staff
- Connect public with information
- Select materials
- Track materials & members
- Implement policies
- Keep & report statistics
- Inform board of trends & local implications
- Act as spokesperson at meetings & with Press



# Ongoing Trustee Duties

## Ongoing Trustee Duties

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Prepare for  
board meetings;  
attend &  
participate

Source:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/mmmavocado/10925542573>



# Ongoing Trustee Duties

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Get to know the  
legal stuff: State  
& Federal Laws

Source:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/pamwood707/5646757752>



## Ongoing Trustee Duties

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# Talk About the Library in the Community

Source:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/90664717@N00/2686040967>



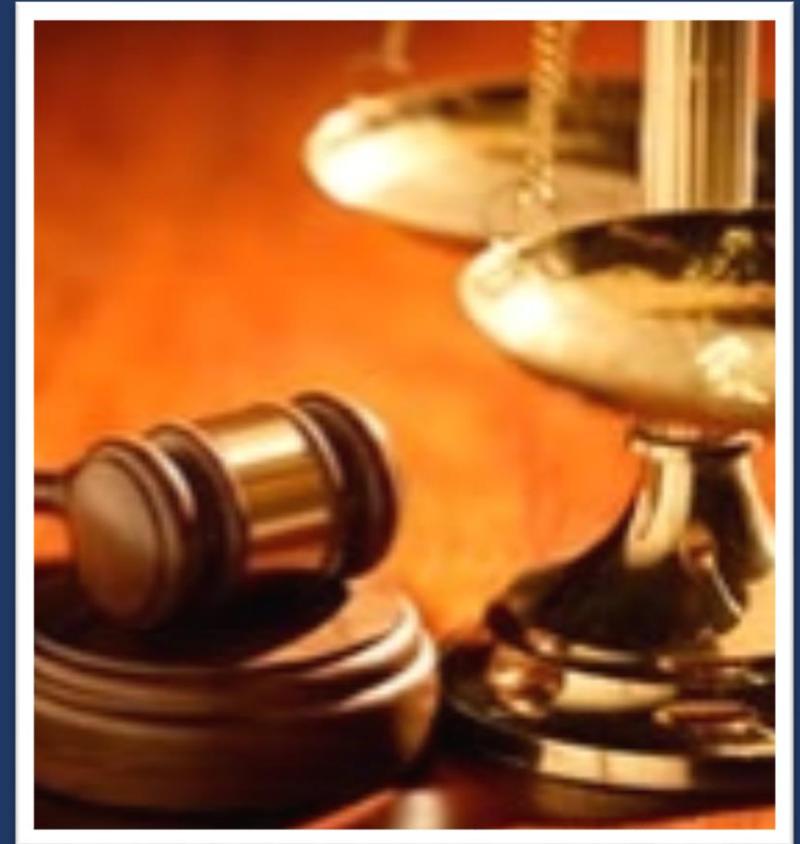
# What Laws Govern Your Work?

# Division of Powers: Trustees & SelectBoard

- Important: We Are All In This Together
- Also Important: Knowing The Law of Public Libraries
  - Municipal Library Trustees: “Shall have full power”  
22 V.S.A. § 143
  - Incorporated Library Trustees: “have control and management of the affairs and property of the corporation” 22 V.S.A. § 105
- It’s a delicate balance to maintain and nurture

# Who Is In Charge?

- Know Your Library's Sources of Authority
- Become Familiar with the Law of Public Libraries
- Our Laws Do Not Address Every Possible Scenario
- Work Together on Behalf of Your Community
- When In Doubt, Consult Your Legal Counsel



Source:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/99558277@N07/10875349695/>

# Ideas for Working Together

## Community Needs Assessment

Source:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/airbnb/13915193802/>



# Ideas for Working Together

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## Community-Wide Initiatives



Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/niallkennedy/9587071278/>

# Ideas for Working Together

## Research Assistance & Information Dissemination

Source:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/pamwood707/5646757752>



# How Libraries Benefit Your Community

Libraries serve as a  
Community Hub -  
bringing the entire  
community  
together



Source: Burnham Mem. Lib. Facebook Page

# How Libraries Benefit Your Community

Libraries are vital  
to a functioning  
democracy



Varnum Memorial Library, Cambridge

# How Libraries Benefit Your Community

Libraries provide a space for educational, social, cultural, and recreational engagement



Source:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/sanjoselibrary/31234520260>

# How Libraries Benefit Your Community

Libraries help your taxpayers connect with local government.



South Burlington Public Library

# How Libraries Benefit Your Community

Libraries are the  
ultimate  
renewable  
resource



Source:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/awesomelibraryservices/16393118653>

# How Libraries Benefit Your Community

Libraries Offer a  
Fantastic ROI\*

\*Library Value Calculator  
[http://www.ala.org/advocacy/  
library-value-calculator](http://www.ala.org/advocacy/library-value-calculator)



Source:  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/143843618@N03>

# Laws: State, Federal, Local, & ALA Guidelines

- Wide Range of Laws & Guidelines to Follow
- Similar to Running a Small Business
- See Handout – “Trustee Training: Laws That Govern Your Work”
- Important to Read and Understand ALA Guidelines:
  - Code of Ethics
  - Freedom to Read & Library Bill of Rights

# When Does Open Meeting Law Apply?

A **quorum** of the board meets to **discuss library business**



Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/wwwworks/9111274504>

# When Does Open Meeting Law Apply?

An official committee of the board meets to discuss library business



Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/wwwworks/9111274504>

# What is the Point of Open Meeting Law?

Give the public a fair & open opportunity to participate in discussions of, & decisions made by, their government



# What is the Point of Open Meeting Law?

Make Government More  
Transparent



Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/wwwworks/9111274504>



# Requirements of Open Meeting Law

- Provide advance notice
- Create & post an agenda
- Conduct business in open meeting
- Allow public comment
- Record & post minutes
- Respond to violation complaints
- Vote by roll call (electronic participation & not unanimous)
- Follow executive session rules

Source:  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/149902454@N08/35417844812>



## Agenda Posting

- Regular Meetings: 48 hours in advance
- Special Meetings: 24 hours in advance
- Emergency Meetings – rare; only for situations requiring immediate attention
- Post on/in:
  - website that the public body designates
  - municipal office
  - 2 other places designated by municipality



## Minutes

- Public Records
- Available within 5 Calendar Days
- Names of Board Members & Active Participants
- All motions, proposals, resolutions, & results of votes
- Not a transcript: “true indication of the business of the meeting”



## Executive Session: How To

- Make a motion: indicate reason, state statutory provision
- Vote must pass by majority to enter
- Chair asks public to exit
- Board may invite staff, clerks, legal counsel, & persons whose information is needed to stay



# Inside Executive Session

- Discuss issue; make no decisions
- Discuss only subject matter of motion
- Decisions from discussion must be voted on outside of executive session

# The Unintended Meeting

Discussing problems, solutions, & other library business over email or text with a quorum



What are the Fiduciary  
Duties of the Trustees?

# Duty of Care or Diligence

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Behave in the  
best interests of  
the library



# Duty of Loyalty

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Avoid conflict  
between duty to  
the library &  
self-interest



# Duty of Obedience

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Understand the  
Statutes, Charter,  
and Bylaws



# Best Practices for Library Trustees



**BEST  
PRACTICE**

**STRAIGHT AHEAD**

Source:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/the-seo-company/8114460868>

# Provide Orientation for New Board Members



**BEST  
PRACTICE**

**STRAIGHT AHEAD**

# Stick to Your Meeting Agenda



# Allow All Trustees to Have a Voice in Meetings



**BEST  
PRACTICE**

**STRAIGHT AHEAD**

# Commit Time Outside of Board Meetings



**BEST  
PRACTICE**

**STRAIGHT AHEAD**

# Provide a Unified Vision & Mission



# Represent the Library in Your Community



**BEST  
PRACTICE**

STRAIGHT AHEAD

# What Is Succession Planning?



Source:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/28537647@N06/2887726958>



# Planning for the Future Governance of Your Library

Source:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/mscaprikel/5966121>

<b>Board Planning Matrix</b>			
	<i>Name</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Name</i>
<b>Gender</b>			
Female			
35-50			
<b>Age</b>			
19-34			
35-50			
51-65			
66+			
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
African American/Black			
Asian/Pacific Islander			
Caucasian			
Hispanic/Latino			
Native American/Indian			
Other			
<b>Community Connections</b>			
Religious organizations			
Corporate			
Education			
Media			
Political			
Philanthropy (Community Volunteers)			
Small business			
Social services			

# United for Libraries

[www.ala.org/united](http://www.ala.org/united)

Qualities	
Leadership skills/motivator	
Willingness to work/availability	
Personal connection to the mission	
Personal Style	
Consensus builder	
Good communicator	
Strategist	
Visionary	
Bridge builder	
Areas of Expertise	
Administration/Management	
Entrepreneurship	
Financial management: Accounting	
Financial management: Investments	
Fundraising	
Government	
Law	
Marketing, public relations	
Human resources	
Strategic planning	
Physical plant (architect, engineer)	
Real estate	
Special program focus (education, health, etc.)	
Technology	
Other	
Number of years (Terms on the board)	
Board-Elected (BE) or Commission-Elected (CE)	

# United for Libraries

[www.ala.org/united](http://www.ala.org/united)



# Job Descriptions for Board Officers

Source:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/29792566>

@N08/6140852961



# Calendar Detailing Yearly Tasks

Source:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/dafnecholet/5374200948>



# Updated Bylaws

Source:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/60588258@N00/3293465641>

# What about the Friends Group?

- Separate entity from the library
- Establish MOU between Friends and Trustees
- Differentiate types of fundraising done by each group & help public understand
- Engage the Friends in Strategic Planning

# Contact Me

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